



What does the Bible say about Christian Marriage?

1. Can we make sense out of all the different voices we hear in our world today about the meaning and purpose of marriage?
2. Are the days of people falling in love and staying married until they die over?
3. As people live longer, move more frequently, seeking the good life with a certain degree of fame and fortune, achieve higher levels of education, have more difficulty making and keeping money, and experience more pressure from the world to move away from old-fashioned moral values based on Christian faith can we in fact chart a realistic course for a married couple today to find genuine happiness and well-being.

What do you believe about Christian Marriage?

1. What is your initial question about your marriage?
2. What do you need to do as an individual to make your marriage work?
3. Are you willing to put forth the effort to have a genuine Christian marriage that glorifies God?

What does it mean to be a Christian?

1. In the Greek the word is Christianou/Christos = **A Christian, a follower of Christ**
2. In the book of Acts 11:26-28 we read ***"Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year***

Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.”

How does a Christian behave as a follower of Christ?

Note key words in Ephesians 4:1-30

1. live a life worthy of the calling you have received
 - a. completely humble
 - b. completely gentle
 - c. completely patient
 - d. completely treating each other in love
 - e. keep the unity of the Holy Spirit in your lives
 - f. live in a bond of peace
 - g. you have one hope
 - h. you have one faith
 - i. you have one baptism
 - j. you have one God and Father who is over all, through all and in all

2. Living as children of darkness - living like the Gentiles (sinners)
 - a. in futility of their minds
 - b. darkened (self-centered) in their understanding
 - c. separated from God because of their ignorance = hardening of their hearts
 - d. having lost their sensitivity
 - e. given themselves over to sensuality
 - f. indulge in every kind of impurity
 - g. continual lust for more

3. You are not to live like this because
 - a. you know Christ
 - b. you heard of him and have been taught in him
 - c. you have put off your old self
 - d. you have a new life
 - e. you have new attitudes of your mind
 - f. you have put on your new self
 - g. you are created to be like God in true righteousness
 - h. you are to speak truthfully to your neighbors
 - i. we are all members of the same body
 - j. we are to walk in righteousness and holiness
 - k. we are to avoid being angry
 - l. we are not to give the devil a foothold
 - m. we are to work and do something useful with our hands
 - n. we are to say only those things that will be helpful to others
 - o. we are to be kind and compassionate
 - p. we are forgiving of one another
 - q. we behave as Christ would behave to the other person

4. Here are 10 words that are imperative in having a good marriage. Rank them in order of importance to you. Rank them as follows: 1 = Never important, 2 = Some what important, 3 = Medium importance, 4 = Important, and 5 = Very important.

- a. ___ Gentle
- b. ___ Kind
- c. ___ Patient
- d. ___ Accepting the other person as they are
- e. ___ Accurately listening to what is being said
- f. ___ Forgiving
- g. ___ Compassionate
- h. ___ Helpful
- i. ___ Looking for the best in the other person
- j. ___ Positive attitude

Select the three that are of most importance to you. Write these down and explain how you are going to practice them in your relationship on a daily basis. It takes 5 to 7 weeks to develop a new life pattern or habit.

1. -

2.

3.

There are three absolute rules you must learn to follow if you want to have a successful marriage and well adjusted family.

1. Never say anything that is unkind and or will hurt the other person.
2. Never do anything that is unkind and or will hurt the other person.
3. Never destroy anything that belongs to another person.

I pledge myself to abide by these regulations and precepts putting them into practice immediately. I will keep a diary of my behavior at the end of each day to keep track of my improved determination to follow Jesus Christ in everything I do and say and to make certain I am living by the three basic rules stated above.

I will share my diary with the counselor each week at our sessions noting both the successes and the failures. I will admit my mistakes and state in writing what I am trying to do to change all of my behaviors in keeping with my Christian faith.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

SECOND CONCEPT

A Covenant Marriage calls for a totally different perspective. It is a deliberate choice to have an open and honest marriage between two people who are committed to living in a genuine Christian relationship based on a mutual faith in Jesus Christ.



WHO NEEDS TO CHANGE?

How many times have we fallen into the trap of thinking my marriage would be better if my spouse would change? Often we make excuses about our responsibility of making a living or taking care of the children as this is the primary point of our relationship. For example I might say, “**My job is to make a living not to make a life for my family**”!! **Now I need to face the question of what did Jesus mean when he taught us to remove the beam from our own eyes rather than trying to remove the speck from our spouse’s eyes!!**

How can I change me is the bigger question we face in our relationship as a married couple.

1. **What is my primary responsibility in marriage?**
 - a. **Thinking about the other person is my first and ultimate priority**
 - b. **We need to focus on changing ourselves not the other person**

Here is a modified version of the Serenity Prayer for each of us: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know that it is me.” Adapted from an Article By John Miller, Denver Colorado in Guidepost August 2006, pages 55 - 59

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

[“In the Old Testament (*Covenant*) the primary Hebrew word is *berit* which means ‘covenant’; ‘league’; ‘confederacy’. The word may come from an Akkadian root which

means 'to fetter' which has parallels in the ancient Hittite, Egyptian, Assyrian and Aramaic languages. According to the dictionary the word 'fetter' is an old word which in English refers to 'a shackle or chain for the feet; anything that holds in check; to restrain; to confine'. On the farm years ago we used 'fettlers' to keep animals from straying away from the farm when there were no fences. It would allow the animal the freedom to eat the grass needed for feed and yet they would not stray too far from the home place. The word **berit** is used 280 times in the Old Testament.

The first occurrence of the word is in Genesis 6:18: Where God says to Noah, "But I will establish **my covenant** with you." The word **berit** is used several times in meaning 'treaty'. For example in Joshua 9:6: "**Then they went to Joshua in the camp of Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, we have come from a distant country; make a 'treaty' with us.**"

The word **berit** is used 260 times to mean 'covenant'.

1. I will establish my covenant with you
2. I will make my covenant with you
3. I will declare my covenant with you
4. My covenant which I command
5. I have remember my covenant
6. I will not forget my covenant
7. God takes the sole initiative in covenant making and fulfillment
8. Men (Christians) are to obey God's covenant
9. Men (Christians) enter into God's covenant
 - a. observe carefully all the commandments of the covenant
 - b. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and might
 - c. It is a relationship of love
 - d. It is a relationship of loyalty
 - e. We become a peculiar people treasured by God
 - f. Observance of the commandments means abundant life
 - g. God's grace is the foundation of all covenants
10. In the New Testament (Covenant) the word **diatheke** is used to translate the Hebrew work **berit**.
11. In the New International Version of the Bible the word **diatheke** is translated 'covenant'

The use of "Old Testament" (Old Covenant) and "New Testament" (New Covenant) as the names for the two sections of the Bible indicates that God's '**Covenant**' is central to the entire book. **The Bible relates God's 'covenant purpose', to man being joined to Him in loving service and knowing eternal fellowship with Him through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.**" (Adapted from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

EPHESIANS 5:1-33

What does it mean to be an imitator of God?

1. Live a life of Love!
 - a. As Christ loved us
 - b. How did Christ love us
2. What is demanded of you as a person who is an imitator of God?
 - a. not even a hint of sexual immorality
 - b. not even a hint of any kind of impurity
 - c. not even a hint of greed
 - d. nor should there be any obscenity
 - e. nor should there be any foolish talk
 - f. nor should there be any coarse joking
3. you can be certain of this:
 - a. no immoral person \
 - b. no impure person \ such a person is an idolater = such a person
 - c. no greedy person / has no inheritance in the kingdom of God!!!
 - d. let no man deceive you with empty words
 - e. this person is disobedient
 - f. God's wrath is on such persons
4. What is the person like who is an imitator of God?
 - a. you are to live as children of light
 - b. goodness
 - c. righteousness
 - d. truth
 - e. pleasing to the Lord
 - f. be very careful how you live
 - g. live as wise persons
 - h. making the most of every opportunity
 - i. understand what the will of the Lord is
 - j. be filled with the Spirit
 - k. speak to one another in psalms
 - l. speak to one another in hymns
 - m. speak to one another in spiritual songs
 - n. sing and make music in your heart to the Lord
 - o. always giving thanks to God the Father for everything

5. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ

hypotasso = to submit, a military term that means to rank under, to arrange – to put into subjection, to subdue, to subject oneself, to obey, to be subject to, submit, to be under subjection, being made subject, etc.

phobos – to fear is used in the Passive Voice and is equal to reverential fear on the part of a wife for a husband,

Ephesians 5:21

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. (KJV)

Maintaining due subordination in the various relations of life. This general principle of religion, the apostle proceeds now to illustrate in reference to wives (Ephesians 5:22-24); to children (Ephesians 6:1-3); and to servants, Ephesians 6:5-8. At the same time that he enforces this duty of submission, however, he enjoins others to use their authority in a proper manner, and gives solemn injunctions that there should be no abuse of power. Particularly he enjoins husbands the duty of loving their wives with all tenderness (Ephesians 5:25-33); on fathers, the duty of treating their children so they might easily obey them (Ephesians 6:4); and on masters, the duty of treating their servants with kindness, remembering that they have a Master also in heaven; Ephesians 6:9. The general meaning here is, that **Christianity does not break up the relations of life, and produce disorder, lawlessness, and insubordination; but it will confirm every proper authority, and make every just yoke (meaningful relationship) lighter (loving and compassionate).** Infidelity is always disorganizing; Christianity, never. (Adapted from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

The role of the wife:

1. Submit to your husband as to the Lord.
2. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church
3. As the church submits to Christ so the wife submits to the husband
4. Now as the church submits to Christ so also wives submit to their husbands

The role of the husband:

1. Love your wives as Christ loved the church
2. He gave himself up for her
3. To make her holy
4. Cleansing her with the washing of water through the word
5. Presenting her to himself as a radiant church
 - A. without spot
 - B. without wrinkle
 - C. without any blemish
 - D. Holy and blameless
 - E. Husband love their wives as their own bodies
 - F. Feed and care for her
 - G. Just as Christ does the church
 - H. Two become one flesh

SUMMARY: "However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband".

As you consider these materials what do you as a person need to do to make your marriage work?

What changes do you need to make in light of Ephesians 4 and 5?

What will happen to your children if you continue on the same course of behavior you are now engaged in?

Who is responsible for the children according to the WORD OF GOD?

What is your CHOICE?

Are you willing to make a commitment to God to change your thinking and your behavior in keeping with the Word of God?

Yes ____ No ____ When do you need to begin the process? _____

Signature: _____

STEP THREE

WHAT IS THE QUESTION



THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY BEGINS AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS!!!

Ephesians 6:1-4, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just and right. Honor your father and mother; this is the first commandment with a promise: That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. Fathers (Parents), do not irritate and provoke your children to anger (do not exasperate them to resentment) but rear them in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord”. (Amplified New Testament)

One = Live a life worthy of your calling in Jesus Christ

Two = Be an imitator of God in your daily lives

Three = Raise your children in the training and instruction of the Lord

What is the question?

The Primary concern:

1. obedience to parent in the Lord
2. honor your father and mother

Question: how can children obey the Lord if their parents are living in an armed camp?

Example: “More is caught than is taught” In other words “Your actions roar so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying”. In other words what do your children really see and hear from you?

3. Note – the parents do not irritate, exasperate, frustrate, hurt, and confuse their children.
4. RATHER – the parents are to train (example) instruct (teach) children in the Lord.

Concept of parenting

- a. Respect (love) for parents, each other and others
- b. Fear (understanding and acceptance) of the Lord
- c. Sincere in heart (where is this learned)
- d. Obedience to Christ (as exemplified in obedience to their parents)
- e. Doing the will of God from the heart (this is first seen in their parents behavior and language)
- f. Doing the will of God from the heart as represented by the lives of their parents
- g. Serve God with all their hearts (following the example of their parents)
- h. The Lord will reward such belief and behavior
- i. Treat everyone in the same way
- j. No favoritism

How is this accomplished?

1. Be strong in the Lord
2. Put on the armor of God
3. Your struggle is against the devil's schemes
 - a. You are in a struggle against rulers, authorities, powers = the spiritual forces of evil
 - b. What are your tools in this struggle?
 - *Belt of truth
 - *Breastplate of righteousness
 - *Shield of faith
 - *Helmet of salvation
 - *Sword of the Spirit
 - *Pray in the Spirit

4. You are an Ambassador of God

Note II Corinthians 5:16-21 especially verse 20 "We are therefore Christ's ambassador, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."

NOTE: "Christianity is not about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION; it is about HEART TRANSFORMATION". p34 "The Dad in the Mirror" by Patrick Morley and David Delk. Zondervan 2003

